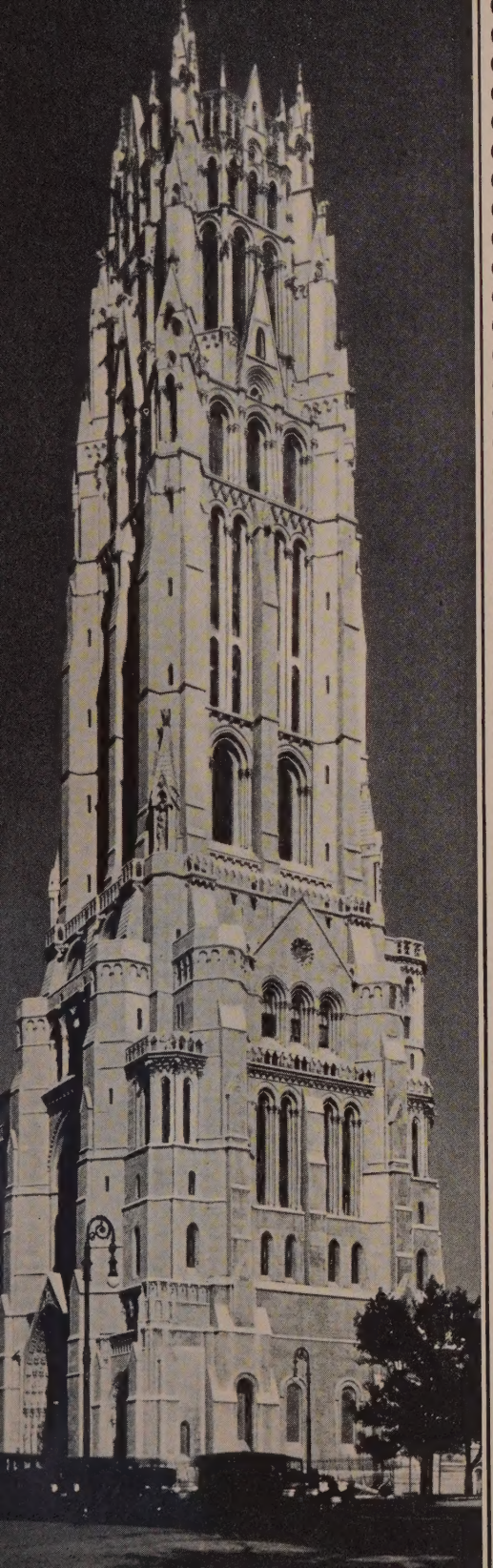

The Church Monthly

APRIL, 1935

Christians in Spite of Everything

Presenting the Riverside Guild

The Effect of the Depression on Youth

PUBLISHED BY THE RIVERSIDE CHURCH, NEW YORK

WE PRESENT

THE RIVERSIDE GUILD
IN THIS ISSUE *of* THE CHURCH MONTHLY

This organization of young people of our congregation issues regularly a publication called *Horizons*. The editor and staff of THE CHURCH MONTHLY invited Miss Edna Gibson and her colleagues on the staff of *Horizons* to furnish the material for the April issue of THE CHURCH MONTHLY. The material presented here will give our readers a first-hand impression of the young people and their activities far better than any report which we might write.

The illustrations accompanying the article are reproductions of posters that the young people used in the Church Budget Exposition on February 27th.

Next month we will tell in more detail and illustrate more fully the story of the "Exposition."

—EDITOR.

The Church Monthly

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Easter Meditation

It gives us joy to remember—
in these days
when He is betrayed in human exploitation,
scourged with racial persecution,
and crucified with the implements of war,—
that even in defeat He triumphs gloriously.
Even from death He rises to victorious Life.
Whenever we go bravely up the way of Love,
His Spirit leads us on;
whenever we beat down the barriers of ancient
hate and rooted bitterness,
He strives with us for the Brotherhood of Man;
whenever we serve and heal the broken
with acts of kindness and mercy,
He also ministers;
Whenever we share Beauty's peace and wonder,
lo, we find His radiant Presence there.
Exult ye! He is Risen!

Christians in Spite of Everything

By Harry Emerson Fosdick

Many find it difficult if not impossible to be Christians because, as they see it, they are living in so powerfully unchristian a world. They might make a success of the Christian life if the social environment would only give them a decent chance, but how can one be Christian, they think, in a world like this? Even Jesus got himself crucified for trying it.

The mail from the radio audience often expresses this mood. In a world of war and economic injustice, amid the down-drag of pagan customs, what is the use of tormenting our individual consciences with urgent appeals to be Christian, when we can never get good Christians until we have a good world? So they write, and much of what they say has so much truth in it, and yet is so inadequate to cover the case, that I invite your consideration of the matter.

First, let us put it biographically. Paul in his Roman prison writing to his Philippian friends, ended his letter saying, "All the saints salute you, especially they that are of Cæsar's household." Saints in Cæsar's household! That was a strange place in which to try to be a Christian—in the imperial retinue of Nero among the lesser nobility, it may be, but especially among the freemen and the slaves. We continually complain at having our fine ideals of brotherhood knocked about and battered by militant nationalism, but think of trying to be a Christian in Cæsar's household! We continually lament the grossness of our commercialized amusements that vulgarize and sometimes brutalize the public taste but, recollecting only the frescoes of Pompeii, think of trying to be a saint at Nero's court! We complain against the greed and cruelty of our social order and the nonchalance and carelessness with which our life proceeds in the face of it, but think of Nero's palace and the Colosseum as a background against which to try to be a Christian. You see, when we have allowed all the justifiable excuses we can muster from our social environment, there still remains something more to say about people who have been Christians in spite of everything.

In other realms than Christian faith and character—the arts, for example—this same truth holds. Creative genius has risen into splendor in many places outside the areas we would have thought fortunate for its emergence. There are times, to be sure, like Elizabethan England, when a confluence of factors creates a culture out of which great artists rise with prolific prodigality. But that does not cover the case or remotely suggest the infinite diversity of circumstance, often fiercely antagonistic, where great art has risen in spite of everything.

Mozart was so poor that all his life was a heartbreaking struggle, and he was buried in a pauper's grave, while Mendelssohn was so well-to-do he never had to think of self-support. John Keats was so crippled by poverty that it is an agony to read his life, while Browning from his youth up was amply cared for by his patrimony.

Infinite has been the diversity of circumstance within which creative genius has burned like fire. We commonly think of art as beautiful. Of course it is, but behind the beauty and indispensable to it is this tougher, hardier matter: a man who has the stuff of creative genius in him will be an artist in spite of everything.

Abstract that spirit from Christian faith and character and we have utterly emasculated it. Surely, some one here today needs to hear that said.

For one thing, if we are to stop blaming spiritual failure on outward circumstance and are to achieve a spiritual victory in the midst of hostile environment, it will be in part because we take antagonistic circumstance for granted as a natural, inevitable part of the problem. Christianity essentially means winning a spiritual victory in the face of hostile circumstance. That is what being a Christian is about. Down from a rocky farm in Connecticut, across which one could almost walk on the stones without touching the ground, comes a story which, though at first it might seem irreverent, voices a healthy philosophy. A minister visited one of his parishioners on a farm which, hitherto a failure, was now, by dint of tireless labor, being made a success. "So," said the minister, "God and you are getting on very well here." "Yes," said the farmer, "but you should have seen this place before when God was trying to handle it alone." Exactly! To start thus with a difficult situation as a place to begin being what Paul called a fellow-worker with God, is the very stuff of a robust Christianity.

Many of us in our time, however, are powerfully tempted to another and a softer attitude, in part because attributing inward failure to outward circumstance is always popular and in part because social pessimism is now in the ascendency and we think we have a dreadfully bad external situation on which to blame spiritual collapse. When my generation was young we were optimistic. We came at the climax of an amazing accumulation of social encouragements crowned by the doctrine of evolution, which to our young and kindled eyes made the whole cosmos seem a going and growing concern. Social optimism was then in the ascendency but it is not so now. The catastrophe of the war broke through the thin veneer of our civilization and revealed the savagery beneath, and the succeeding economic disaster has deepened the pessimistic mood. Some of our contemporary pessimism is healthy. The optimism was pleasanter but much of it was unjustified and cheap. We have a chance now to be more soundly realistic than we used to be. But some of our current pessimism works a disastrous consequence in that it gives multitudes of people, who are glad enough to take it, a chance to say that this is so crazy and disheveled a world that they can see no use in trying to be Christians at all. I want another slogan to sound in the consciences of some here today tempted to take that attitude: Saints in Cæsar's household. A spiritual victory won in the face of hostile environment—that is what being a Christian is all about.

Of course, I understand the protest which already is in some minds. Some might say:

> This is a high-sounding exhortation, to tell us to be Christians in spite of everything, but so far as millions of our population are concerned, it is nonsense. To be a

Christian in spite of being born and reared in the depth of some city slum, to be a Christian in spite of being a child in a share-cropper's family with never a decent thing to civilize and elevate the soul, to be a Christian despite the fact that the economic situation is such that like multitudes of young people one cannot marry and found a home, or in a world where periodically the nations plunge their youth into the hell of war—what absurdity is this? Far from saying that we should be Christian in spite of everything, it would be fairer to say that we must change pretty nearly everything in order to get Christians at all.

To all of this I should answer, That is handsomely said, but you have forgotten one thing. Make that kind of excuse for everybody else but not for yourself. Never! For yourself no default! Go out, indeed, to help change circumstance which so crucially needs to be changed. Strength and courage to you as you try to lift the handicaps that so cruelly rest on human souls! But for yourself, no excuses, no defense mechanisms, no passing of the buck! A clean conscience whatever happens, a saint even in Cæsar's household, a spiritual victory despite circumstance—that is every man's business *with himself*.

Cannot you imagine John Keats lamenting the lost poetry of young and kindled souls in whom beauty might have sung its way to immortal fame but who, crushed by poverty, found their songs quenched before they started? So Keats might have felt and so one can imagine his laboring sympathetically and indignantly to change circumstance to make poets possible. But for himself, though he was so poor that often his days were agony, he took no leave from that to stop his singing. For himself, no default. "I think," he said once, in one of the most wretched periods of his life, "I shall be among the English poets after my death."

So, wherever one looks—in science, the arts, music, Christian character, practical success even—one finds this basic duty: endless sympathy for anybody else crushed by external circumstance, but for oneself no blame of inward failure on outward environment!

Consider, again, that if a man is to make a high success of his spiritual life in the midst of hostile environment, it will be in part because he centers his attention not so much upon his outward pressures as upon his interior resources. Whenever in any realm you find a saint in Cæsar's household, you may be sure that deep within him this thing has happened: he has cultivated a keen awareness of his spiritual resources so that in the orientation of his thinking they have become most real to him and his consciousness of the outward environment has been secondary. Sometimes I think *that* constitutes about the profoundest difference between people.

How many great books, for example, have been written in prison! Paul wrote his letter to the Philippians in prison, Cervantes started Don Quixote there, and John Bunyan worked on The Pilgrim's Progress in Bedford jail. When one considers how they could do that, it is evident that they must have concentered their attention on their interior resources rather than on their outward circumstances. Like all the rest of us, they lived in two worlds: first, the external system of circumstances alien to their wishes, antago-

nistic to their finest aspirations, a veritable prison house; but, on the other side, the inner world where a man's mind may be his kingdom, where there are doors of the spirit which a man can open and which then no man or circumstance can shut—realms, principalities, and dominions of the soul where one walks at liberty. As between these two, they so minimized the outer and maximized the inner that they proved to themselves and to mankind that

> Stone walls do not a prison make,
> Nor iron bars a cage.

Granting that this illustration is drawn from extraordinary experience, it is still true to our ordinary life. For it is our externalism that commonly ruins us, our absorption with things, our obsessed attention habitually given to the setting of our lives, so that were we to be in Bedford jail it would be a long time before we thought of anything except the jail; not readily would it occur to us that even there the soul might walk the Delectable Mountains. So, because we take our cue for everything from circumstance, when we face circumstance hostile to high character we blame moral failure on that. We take our moral cue also from circumstance. One hates to think what some of us would have been in Nero's court. We would have gone native with a vengeance and the excuse would have been ready: What else do you expect in Cæsar's household?

As a matter of fact, as I understand my own soul, that is a false excuse. The worst foes of my spiritual life have never been hostile circumstance. Upon the contrary, sometimes hostile circumstance has been like a strong wind on a flying field, a grand force to take off against for a flight, if one knows how to do it. The deepest foes of my spiritual life have had their origin far down within the soul. There is no situation into which life ever put me that I could not have handled better than I did if I could have gotten my eyes more on, and made more out of, the interior resources of the soul, until *that* was the realest world to me.

Does some one say that it is hard work being a Christian if one is very poor? Of course it is. But imagine yourself very rich. Do you think it would be easier then? You know who said it was easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven. It is hard to be a Christian if one is very poor and, if anything, it is harder if one is very rich. That is to say, it is hard to be a Christian anywhere in a world like this and, whether rich or poor, in whatever environment life may be set, there is no such thing as triumphant living save as one learns the secret which Mrs. Browning once put into four simple but profound words: "Life develops from within." So! Show us any great soul that has risen triumphant out of trouble. That is the secret—life develops from within. If a man lets his life develop from without, if he takes the moral dent of circumstance, drinks intemperately because everybody drinks, is sensual because this is a sensual generation, copies Nero in Nero's court, then he belongs truly to the congregation of the damned, who have literally lost their souls. But to have life develop from within, to have the origin and fountainhead of one's living come from deep resources in the soul, that *is* living. And obviously it is only out of such living that one ever gets a saint in Cæsar's household.

Consider once more these saints in Cæsar's household. Not only did they take difficult situations for granted and have lives that developed from within, but they allied themselves with whatever saving elements they could find in their environment. Hitherto we have talked about their experience as though it were merely individualistic. No! Saints in Cæsar's household—they were plural. They were a group; they stood together. They had a strong fellowship harnessed to the help of their souls, else how could they have stood their ground in Nero's court?

A great teacher of ethics, T. H. Green, said once, "No individual can make a conscience for himself. He always needs a society to make it for him." Surely, that proves its truth in our experience. A man's conscience never is merely or mainly individual. It is always socially created and sustained. In Cæsar's household both the Christians on one side and Nero's cronies in debauchery upon the other had consciences socially produced—the debauchees' conscience created by the general society they lived in, the Christians' conscience created by a special society they had deliberately picked out to live in.

How many people do you think are here this morning, accustomed vaguely to talk about being Christian, who need powerfully to be laid hold on by this truth? An individual cannot make a conscience for himself but always needs a society to make it for him. Behind our artificial and highly organized churches one wishes we could get back to the original idea of a church. 'Ecclesia'—that is the Greek word used in the New Testament for 'church,' and it means 'called out,' 'selected.' It suggests that a man can have a world of his own to live in within the larger world. Out of the hodge-podge and potpourri of the social mass with its down-drag upon life, a man can choose those saving elements that elevate, purify, and empower the soul. In the fellowship of such selected elements he finds his 'ecclesia,' his church, where his conscience is rekindled and from which he goes out again to face the wrath of devils and the scorn of men. No man ever yet lived a great life without having in that sense of the word a 'church.'

My soul, think what your 'ecclesia' has done for you! For out of the general mass of the world you have selected some special things for your intimate companionship—the beauty of the green earth by day and the stars by night, great books, great music, great friends, the noblest traditions of the race, its finest faiths, its most illustrious souls, Christ over all. See how out of the mass of life you have chosen your 'ecclesia.' No one can ever live a great life without such a church.

If some one asks what all this has to do with the actual churches, the answer is that the meaning of the actual churches lies in the endeavor to make this experience easy of access, available to all who want it, real and effective. All organizations fall short of their ideal significance, as courts fall short of ideal justice, but the meaning of a church is this: it tries to help people to have a society within society, a world within the world, an 'ecclesia' of ideas and ideals, of faiths and purposes, of great souls, the noble living and the noble dead, and Christ over all, in whose fellowship they will have some chance of being saints in Cæsar's household.

I beg of you, do not let your idea of the church grow stiff and formal. Keep it plastic and vital. Paul did. In prison, where he needed, if ever a man needed it, a world within the world which so dragged him down, he had an 'ecclesia.' He wrote to one friend who was coming from the east, "Bring when thou comest . . . the books, especially the parchments." So the great books of his race were part of his 'ecclesia.' And his friends were part of it, not simply those whom he could see and touch, like "Luke, the beloved physician," but that larger body of Christians across the empire who kept reminding him that he was not alone but a member of a beloved community to whose ideas the future belonged. And his interior world of thought was part of his 'ecclesia' also. Listen to him there in prison: "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honorable, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things." What an 'ecclesia'!

This is too tough a world to try to be Christian in without that. The consequence of what we are saying in general this morning will in many lives depend on just this point. If you go out vaguely thinking as an individual to be a Christian, Cæsar's household will get you. You need an 'ecclesia.'

Finally, let us try to satisfy some here who have been discontented. For probably some have been troubled by the fact that what we have been saying seems to leave this wicked world unchanged with merely a few people trying to be Christian within it. That, however, is not the end of the story. Cæsar's household was not unchanged. Cæsar's household was abolished. As one of the leading scholars of our times has analyzed it, that early Christian movement gradually undermined and destroyed the old order of the ancient world by withdrawing the spiritual allegiance of millions of souls from it and giving that allegiance to another set of values altogether. What consequence came out of those saints in Cæsar's household almost passes belief.

Two young sisters were disputing about which was the last book of the Bible and one was heard to exclaim to the other, "Barbara, I tell you the Bible does *not* end in Timothy; it ends in Revolutions." History validates the truth thus unwittingly stated, so that none should leave this sanctuary saying that the conclusion of the matter is a few individuals lifted out of the wicked world. Rather, this is the conclusion of the matter, that if this desperately needy world is ever to be saved, with not souls only but the societies of men redeemed to a kingdom of peace and righteousness, there is one indispensable prerequisite for which no substitute will ever be discovered: men and women, namely, who do not wait for Cæsar's household to be redeemed before they begin living redeemed lives within it—Christians in spite of everything!

PRAYER

Eternal God, our Father, we beseech Thee that Thou wilt give us not only the ideal aspiration but the basic courage that will enable us to be Christians in the midst of this modern world. We ask it in the spirit of Christ. Amen.

Dr. Fosdick preached the foregoing sermon January 20, 1935.

Prayer

By Harry Emerson Fosdick

Eternal Spirit, Who art the life of all that really lives, within us [illegible] of our passionate indifference and weariness and unbelief, we worship Thee. Thou Who dost cherish beneath the winter cold the seeds of life that yet will make another spring, nourish within us also all vital forces that we may come to beauty and to fruit. For [illegible] our bodies only but our souls, too. Thy servants, trying to lift up their hearts to the highest, stilled by the world's hurtful [illegible] wonder, by an inward [illegible] their own. Therefore kindle upon us, Thou sun of righteousness, thine own warm Thy penetrating light. Lift us up into Thy radiance. Awaken in us all that is excellent and beautiful and make us go down from this place of prayer living on a higher height and breathing a purer air.

Plant we pray Thee, against the background of our blessings unceasing contrition. Forgive us that oft when we complain of the world's chill and forget that it is our own while that from within have grown cold. Because we have forgotten Thee, because we have striven for prizes and not for life, we have ourselves moved our spirits out into the winter. Recover for us, we beseech Thee, stronger faith and deeper courage. May our minds be to us this day a kingdom where Thou dost sit enthroned.

We lay before Thee our dear and unmet cares, especially praying for all servants of the common good. For those that heal our bodies, instruct our minds, or inspire our spirits, for those who serve in the market place or who open the gates of beauty in art and music. Especially we pray for the teachers of this nation and for the schools where our children go. Forgive us for our folly that we build armies and navies and destroy schools, and kindle this nation to a fresh appreciation of the high vocation of teaching and of democracy's foundation in well-instructed youth.

We pray Thee in these troubled days for the President of the United States, for the Governor of this state and the Mayor of our city. Amid perplexities [illegible] and problems unsolved, let not wisdom stumble or character be [illegible]. Grant that, beyond our power to see the end of all these tangled ways, even the wrath of man may be made to serve Thee that we may build brotherhood and prosperity [illegible].

Come close to us in every private need. Pass the barricades of our reluctance and inhospitality, and minister to our inner wants. Souls are here bereaved, as though their very hearts were buried in the tomb, and needing fortitude and comfort. Wandering spirits need guidance and burning spirits need strength and adventure and remembrance. Lo, how before Thee even in this company all human need is somewhere present. Not according to the poverty of our prayer but according to the riches of Thy grace in Christ come Thou through some secret passage into every heart. We ask it in the spirit of Christ. Amen.

Presenting the Riverside Guild

WHAT is this thing—the Riverside Guild? Constitutionally described, it is a fellowship of young people, bound together by a community of purpose, who wish to discuss social and religious problems, enjoy worthwhile avocations and recreations, derive spiritual growth through worship, and use avenues of practical service to express the spirit of Christ. At work a living, breathing, increasingly integrated group as indicated by the sketches which follow.

From a nucleus of ninety young people coming from the Park Avenue Church group in 1929, the membership for this year reached 382. At first a group almost extraneous to the church itself, with only three per cent of the Guild membership as members of The Riverside Church, the Guild now proves an avenue to church affiliation. Forty-seven per cent of the present Guild members have united with the church, where many of them also serve in the Church School, on the Board of Ushers, and in other groups.

The Guild draws its membership from surprising distances—Long Island, Staten Island, New Jersey, Westchester—as well as from the church neighborhood. At times, it seems like an "out-of-towners' club," with young people from 36 states and 13 foreign countries making it their spiritual, social, and recreational headquarters. Approximately 39 per cent of Guild members are college graduates, while many others are currently engaged in cultural or technical studies. In addition to the membership, over 500 listed individuals attend more or less regularly.

The activities, about 36 in number, with approximately 100 distinct phases of work, reflect nearly all typical aspects of avocational interest shown by a cross-section of young people such as the Guild attracts. These activities include arts and crafts, recreation, discussion, and music groups, Horizons (Guild's weekly publication), Drama Workshop, Camera and Motion Picture Clubs, and Social Service. Committee chairmen form a cabinet directly under the supervision of an elective council of four persons.

For the past six years, Mr. Hellstrom has been, and we earnestly hope

will continue to be, friend and advisor to the Riverside Guild. We have come to know and love him, to respect his sincerity, to admire his knowledge, and to appreciate his frankness.

As our advisor, he has indicated to us how to live more abundant lives. His interpretations of the teachings of Jesus break through the barriers of creeds and hearsay. Sharing with us his penetrating analysis of contemporary life needs, he stimulates our curiosity, our eagerness to learn, and our interest in human values.

These human qualities merit our warm regard, and we wish to express here the sincere appreciation we feel for the sympathetic understanding Mr. Hellstrom shows toward our problems as young people.

Our "Service Projects" Outside of Our Own Church

One of Guild's oldest projects in the Social Service field is the monthly dance at the Lighthouse, an affiliation of the New York Association for the Blind. The girls and the Guilders with mutual enthusiasm look forward to those Tuesday evenings when they make friendships and enjoy social dancing.

Saturday afternoons find many Guilders acting the rôles of story-tellers to the crippled youngsters at the New York Orthopedic Hospital. The fervor with which they are received more than compensates the visitors for sacrificing what is, for most of them, their only free afternoon in the week.

At the Howard Mission and Home for Little Wanderers monthly entertainments are arranged which include music, impersonations, and readings. These children range in age from six to fourteen years, and each performance invariably leaves at least one aspiring concert pianist, or actor, in its wake.

Perhaps most interesting of all is The Morning Star Mission work in Chinatown, where on Sunday afternoons Guilders teach English to the Chinese. The Guild teachers, incidentally, are beginning to learn some of the Chinese symbols and social customs so that the program has almost become one of mutual exchange.

The other Mission project is the Chinese Girl Scout Troop, to which financial as well as moral support is given. Besides regular school the children have to attend the Chinese School from four to seven o'clock in the evening, where they learn Chinese characters and literature, so that any recreational activity in which they are invited to participate is considered a great privilege. Too much cannot be said for the benefits which these little Chinese girls derive from the Scout activities; it is giving them a foundation for future citizenship of the very highest order.

One of the special Christmas features is the Christmas Eve party at The Jennie Clarkson Home for Girls where stockings are filled and a festive party is given to help brighten their holiday.

With talented Guilders who can entertain, and laden with hosts of good things to eat, several times annually we take the "tugboat" to Welfare Island. There at the City Home for the Aged (and aged means ninety years or older for some), we give a party and are received with most flattering enthusiasm.

A monthly program, sponsored at the Bowery Y. M. C. A., consists of entertainment, including sometimes a play.

The Place of Drama in Our Work

The Drama Workshop—how much that name implies: the work that is not labor; the opportunity to express oneself in the most democratic of the arts.

Any organization must present a sustained program in order to retain

THROUGH DRAMA IDEAS ARE MADE VIVID AND WORSHIPPERS ARE CHALLENGED TO CARRY IDEALS INTO ACTION

interest in this field. On the other hand, a "workshop" too highly organized loses its informality and freshness. Roughly, our philosophy is this: that since Drama is the most democratic of the arts, we must give all who desire it the opportunity to participate; that holding to high standards, we present only "good" plays, good both as literature and as drama; that desiring to provoke thought we deal with some social and personal problem plays.

It has been said, and truly, that the best way to arouse and maintain interest in a dramatic group is to give a play. Our problem is not to arouse interest; it is to guide it toward some definite end. We had originally planned to start producing immediately. We realized, however, the necessity for some sort of groundwork. Consequently, the first part of the year was spent in study. We were most fortunate in procuring as our teacher Mr. M. Solatoroff, who has studied and been associated with the outstanding figures of the theatre, including Stanislavisky, Reinhardt, Nijinski, and Craig. His first lectures were general, tracing the development of the Drama from its beginnings through the various Golden Ages and up to the present. Then he interpreted the arts as expressed in the theatre and the methods of the masters. The lectures became more specific, dealing in color, form, grouping, movement, etc. Occasionally we have had other speakers who are eminent in some phase of the theatre.

Last summer, when the Workshop was nebulous, we were confronted with these limitations: first, the large stage was not available as often as we desired it because so many groups share in the use of the Assembly Hall; second, there was a dearth of Guild directors; and, third, we had difficulty in setting properly a stage with a minimum of

confusion. With these things in mind, we recognized that our best course lay in close coöperation with all groups using the Assembly and in making reservations well in advance. By the end of this year, or possibly by the early part of next season, we should have developed at least five competent directors, each one of whom will have produced a one-act play. With competent direction a green stage crew can accomplish wonders. We now have on call at least twenty people who may be relied upon to know the difference between a "baby spot" and a floor clamp.

This year the Workshop is close to achieving a goal which has long been desired—the concentration of Guild dramatic activities within one department. It cannot be said that our progress has been rapid, but it has been definite and sure. In addition to our Thursday night program we have taken over the staging of the dramatic Worship Services, as well as the handling of Social Service projects. "Workshop" will also coöperate with the Guild Chorus in staging the coming presentation of "The Pirates of Penzance."

It is significant that these past few very trying years have seen the birth and growth of ardent and ambitious amateur groups throughout the country, thereby developing a vigorous, intelligent, and daring theatre. We hope our own group is contributing to this movement and that its contribution will become more valuable as we progress.

The Place of Worship

From near and far, with great diversity of religious backgrounds, with marked differences in worship attitudes, experiences, and expectations, there come each week several hundred young people to the Sunday evening

"LET THE WORDS OF MY MOUTH AND THE MEDITATION OF MY HEART BE ACCEPTABLE IN THY SIGHT, O LORD, MY STRENGTH AND MY REDEEMER"—PSALM 19

Service of Worship. What do they find? A service of Meditation in the Chapel, a Rhythmic Dancing Masque in the Nave, a Drama in the Assembly Hall—any one of a variety of types of services and of different themes.

The stimulating challenge of the group is due in part to its heterogeneous membership. Catholic, Protestant, and Jew sit side by side; Liberals and Fundamentalists sing the same hymns; Theists and Humanists join in the same prayers. Naturally, it is uncommonly difficult to attain any unity of spiritual experience and to achieve a sense of group communion. There is, however, a common spirit of aspiration.

With this understanding on the part of the Worship Committee, it becomes its task to construct an outline of the year's worship program and to formulate a general plan for individual services. In the light of the most pertinent needs and interests of the group, as far as it is possible to discover them, themes for the year are chosen. While many possibilities were considered, it seemed wise to begin this year with the universal problems which we face as individuals. Most of us could say with Dwight L. Moody, "I've had more trouble with myself than with any other person I ever knew." To help us discover our individual potentialities Mr.

GOD OF ALL LOVELY SOUNDS
GRANT US A SHARE IN THY GREAT
HARMONIES OF EARTH AND AIR;
MAKE US THY CHORISTERS
THAT WE MAY BE WORTHY TO
OFFER MUSIC UNTO THEE

THROUGH RHYTHMIC DANCING WE RESPOND TO THE PSALMIST—PRAISE GOD IN HIS SANCTUARY; PRAISE HIM WITH TIMBREL AND DANCE: PRAISE YE THE LORD:
—PSALM 150

Hellstrom spoke on "Living Creatively"; a message by Dr. Fosdick revealed "The Spiritual Meaning of Fellowship"; a drama "The Devil Passes" stimulated thought about the individual's relation to God. These were the media through which the theme "Problems of Personal Living" was presented. Other services in the series dealt with war, integrity of character, and vocational possibilities.

The next series, "Our Christian and National Heritage," sought to give the individual an appreciation of his oneness with our great heritage. As we listened to Harry Burleigh sing his own Negro spirituals and tell of his people's aspirations, we were awakened to religion's power to sustain a race in deprivation and suffering. Seeing great religious paintings interpreted, we felt our religious heritage in art come to life.

Thence we turned to the individual's relationship to his present setting by depicting our tremendous contemporary social problems and by indicating our responsibility in the situation. This was a series on "A Constructive Approach to Our Social Problem."

Setting up "Drama Worship" Services

Let us go behind the scenes and see a drama service in the making.

Sixty Guilders and two thousand hours of work combined to produce "Can You Hear Their Voices?" a drama of misery in the wake of drought and depression. It was a project of the Drama Workshop. At the outset the meaning of the play and its effective use as a service of worship were discussed. A large number tried out for the forty rôles; five stage models were submitted; committees on staging, lighting, costumes, and properties were formed. A real attempt was made to have the whole group work together to present a unified service. They tried to carry the message that the unfortunate everywhere are crying for help; and asked us as Christians, "Can You Hear Their Voices?" The play caused much discussion. Many requested that its implications be further considered. The following Sunday the group met under the leadership of Mr. Hellstrom to clarify the ethical issues and to understand more definitely its Christian significance.

Now, as we approach the Easter season, we will consider the "Life and Significance of Jesus," emphasizing the light He throws upon our personal and social problems. The closing period of our Guild year will have as its theme, "Gaining a Sense of Perspective."

Everybody Participates

Diverse temperaments choose various pathways to the presence of God. The sanctuary of our souls unlocks to different keys. Is not every yearning for greater values a token of our kinship with the Divine? And is not every sincere attempt to live more abundantly and to help others to fulfill their needs and ideals a consecration at the altar of God? By having a variety of themes presented through different media in different settings, we have tried to reach everyone—the artist sensitive to beauty, the scholar alert for the intellectual appeal, the tired and lonely soul searching for peace and spiritual fellowship, the worker seeking resources for personal living, the professional leader desiring to work toward a more ethical society. Through art, music, ritual, services of meditation, speakers, the drama, motion pictures, and the dance, we have sought to bring real experiences to Guild members.

It is interesting to note that by the end of the year nearly half the Guild will have participated in presenting our program of worship, as committee planners, leaders of services, speakers, musicians, directors of drama, actors, dancers, stage crew, designers, technicians, and ushers. For some, this active participation and development of leadership is most valuable.

While we cannot expect that every service has been especially helpful to everyone, we can at least hope that each service has been of deep significance to some. In so far as we are true to our purpose, not only the Sunday evening services but all activities of the Guild are a part of our enterprise of daily worship.

The aim of the Worship Service, as we conceive and seek to achieve it, is to develop our sensitivity to the beautiful, to sharpen our search for truth, to foster our appreciation of our religious heritage in the life and teachings of Jesus, to deepen our understanding of the personal and social problems of life, to increase our awareness of the crucial ethical issues in our contemporary world, and to challenge our enlistment in worthy causes. In all these ways it inspires us to be more worthy followers of the Incomparable Master!

The Effect of the Depression on Youth

A member of the Riverside Guild, a young physician, gives his impressions

THE theme, said the Editor to me, is The Effect of the Depression on Youth. Have you seen any of this?

I leaned against her desk and shifted my eyes so that they rested on a picture behind her. But they weren't seeing the picture—they were remembering that three days ago in the Out-Patient Department (that part of the hospital where poor people come for medical attention) a young antique dealer sat at my desk. I made the diagnosis on him of malnutrition and secondary anemia; cause—too poor to buy proper food.

The next day another youth, a chemist, sat in the same chair. The diagnosis was Recurrence of Ulcer of Stomach. Cause—improper diet due to inability to buy the prescribed foods.

Yesterday a young girl—a musician—sat in it; a young musician with Malnutrition because of lack of funds to eat regularly.

And today an engineer twenty-nine years of age sat there. He had Pulmonary Tuberculosis due to lack of proper nutrition and sunshine.

My eyes once again looked at the Editor and I nodded. Yes, I had seen some.

Would I write a few paragraphs about it?

I returned to the hospital and sought out my friend, the social worker. "I know their scientific side pretty well," I told her. "What can you tell me of their living side?"

She brought me a stack of charts, at least twenty. "When you finish these . . ."

"Only four cases?" I interrupted, "no more space than that?"

I read the typewritten sheets and jotted down an abstract as I went along.

"You must not use names. Give them numbers."

I nodded and made notes.

"Case No. 28015. Female. Age 17. Intelligent and attractive. Student at Juilliard Music School. Accomplished violinist. Devoted to her music. Parents lost money. Father lost job. Lack of funds necessitated removing student from music school. Girl complaining of weakness. Very pale. Impression: Malnutrition and Secondary Anemia."

The social worker watched me write down the diagnosis. "That accurately describes the body starving for food," she observed. "But what are you going to label the soul hungry for music?"

I didn't—I knew not how to—reply.

There was another chart:

"Case No. 74176. Male. Age 32. Occupation: dealer in antiques. Education: High School and Art School. No employment for months. Used all savings and sold all belongings for living expenses. Money ran out. Became ill. Admitted to hospital. Diagnosis: Malnutrition. Refused to talk about his financial condition. When pressed, disclosed that he had no money, no job, no change of clothing, and on leaving the hospital must go hungry again. Was given ten dollars and allowed out on pass to buy things, which he did:

second-hand things. Patient discharged. When heard from next, was living on the Bowery. A contact with Home Relief has been made. Case closed."

I picked up another:

"Case No. 29798. Male. Age 26. Chemist. Lost job in 1932. On Home Relief. Draws $8.50 every two weeks to support himself, wife, and child. 10-3-'33 pawned watch for $10.00 and borrowed $8.00 to pay rent. 1-6-'33 obtained relief work job as timekeeper in construction work at Central Park, salary $10.00 per week. 1-31-'34 work hours reduced; pay reduced accordingly. 2-7-'34 was transferred from timekeeper to laborer. Began to be bothered with pain in stomach. Diagnosis—Ulcers of stomach, aggravated by hard labor and poor food. 3-7-'34 finds job as night watchman in a theatre. This eases strain on ulcer condition. 6-19-'34 play a failure. Theatre shuts down. Patient loses job but has heard that theatre will reopen again in four months—hopes to get job back again then."

Here, the social worker looked up from one she had been reading. "Maybe you might want this case, too."

I became attentive and jotted down notes as she sketched the history aloud:

"Case No. 27964. Male. Graduated with honors from Engineering School. Salary up to depression $120 per week. After crash he and his wife and daughter lived on savings and the money from cashed-in insurance policies. Everything now gone. Asked for Relief work. Application rejected. Finally given clerical work in office of Relief Bureau. Became ill. Diagnosis: Pulmonary Tuberculosis. Lost job. Put in bed. Wife reports she has money enough for food for next few days. Patient referred to City Hospital for admission. Wife reports her husband would never go to a charity hospital. Patient no better. Funds gone. Wife later reports that husband, spirit broken, permitted her to take him to City Hospital. Case closed."

"Yes, I'd like to use this case," I told the social worker. "But wait, how old is this man?"

"Fifty-two."

I frowned, then shaking my head vigorously I ran my pencil through the words I had just written.

"No. Won't do. Too old."

"Too old?"

"Yes, I want the effect of the depression on Youth. That's the theme we want to dwell on—Youth."

She dropped the case report on a chair.

"On Youth. I haven't observed," she remarked quietly, "that the depression has spared the old."

I glanced at my numerous notes with a start. "No more space," I interjected. "Must stop." I returned the case histories, and gathering my notes, thanked her.

My friend reminded me again: "Please be sure and use case numbers rather than names, won't you? These people are so sensitive."

I nodded.

As I departed I thought to myself, "Numbers. Case numbers. How much a number can hide! How aglow and alive a person it really could represent, and how sick and broken!"

These people have been aglow with life, with vitality. Now they are broken—sick—just numbers!

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Music

THE Guild's music group known as "Personal Enrichment Through Music," which meets on Sunday evenings, is the Mecca of music lovers, both trained and untrained. Those who have the training form the nucleus which directs the programs and leads the discussion. The music is played on a fine electrically controlled reproducing machine which carries the deepest tone as well as the lightest cadence with remarkable accuracy. The records are borrowed from private or public libraries, and from The Riverside Church.

Such music as the Bach "B Minor Mass," Beethoven's "Pastoral Symphony in D," and the "Good Friday Spell" from Wagner's "Parsifal" have been played.

Having spent an hour in a room where the subdued lighting and the quiet dignity of the raconteur lend an atmosphere peculiarly appropriate, one can indeed go into the Worship Service which follows, relaxed and in a receptive mood.

Transients—A CONSTANT FACTOR HERE

WE of New York City are probably more familiar with the genus Migratory Man than any other representative population in that there are attracted to us annually upwards of two hundred and fifty millions of visitors. These figures are staggering, so staggering that doubtless you are saying that they can not be true since they exceed by far the total number of people living in the United States. Yet the tabulation of railroad, tube, tunnel, ferry, and automobile passenger traffic in and out of New York City over a period of three years is as follows: 1931—356,000,000; 1932—306,000,000; and 1933—274,000,000. Now that the cat's out of the bag, anyone can see that the above statistics include all the suburban workers who hustle into our island each morning and home to a warm dinner each night. Yet with all due and proper allowances there is certainly no other small area on this earth faced with a Mother Hubbard problem of such magnitude.

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YOUTH SPEAKS

It was with real pleasure and a bit of apprehension that Riverside Guild's "Horizons" staff received Dr. Carder's invitation to issue the April number of THE CHURCH MONTHLY. We appreciate the honor and confidence expressed in this way and gladly accept the opportunity to present Youth in the adventure of living in these disturbing times.

With Jesus' keen understanding of human depths and the intrinsic potentialities of the individual, it is little wonder that He chose to carry on His ministry through a small band of volunteer workers.

The real test of character comes in the handling of the task for the task's sake alone. Nowhere does personality show its fine loyalty or its lack of stability, its noble ideals or its base motives, its love of work well done or its careless indifference to the task at hand, its trustworthiness to carry on to the end, or readiness to give up when the newness has worn off as clearly as in the volunteer worker.

Whatever our work may be, we find strength and renew our faith from the wells of sacrifice, loyalty, and devotion in the persons about us on every hand who volunteer to share the burden of our task.

We achieve growth and broadening of our personality, adventure, and experience by taking hold somewhere in the field of action. In so giving ourselves to life, we feel life itself flow through us and find renewed within ourselves the great joy of dynamic living.

The Riverside Church Fund

(This bulletin from the Endowment Fund Committee will advise the friends of The Riverside Church of the opportunity which is theirs to support the work here and to insure its continuance in the years to come.)

Members and Friends of The Riverside Church:

At a Corporate Meeting of The Riverside Church in the City of New York held April 8, 1931, the members voted upon and adopted a Declaration of Trust creating The Riverside Church Fund.

The Fund was established for the promotion of the Christian religion along the broadest and most liberal lines and for the corporate uses and purposes of our Church.

It is provided in part that only the income may be used up to a period of twenty-five years, after which the Church has the right to appropriate a certain percentage of the principal each year for the purposes and uses set forth in the Declaration of Trust.

Our members and friends are urged to assist in the building up of the Fund by their contributions.

A few of the means by which you can share a part in the Fund are through:

Gifts of cash or securities
Bequests under your Will
Insurance on your life payable to the Fund at your death
Life Annuities
Living Trusts
and through other means.

Further information regarding the terms and conditions of the Trust can be obtained from any member of the Endowment Fund Committee, who may be reached through the Church Office.

Before gifts are made in whatever form, the Committee or Church Office should be consulted as the method of procedure is important.

It is the sincere hope of your Committee that the splendid work being accomplished by our Church, and to continue in the years to come, may prompt your favorable consideration of the opportunity thus placed before you.

ENDOWMENT FUND COMMITTEE

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